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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 18 JULY 1997 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to attach a copy of the letter from Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Republic and head of State, concerning the status of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), set up in January 1997 following the serious disturbances that occurred in the Central African Republic.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ambroisine KPONGO
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 4 July 1997 from Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic, addressed to the Secretary-General

The Central African Republic is today facing a grave crisis, which, in a context of great regional instability, justifies my addressing the Security Council directly today to request the international community's support for the current peace efforts. This crisis stems from the army rebellions which broke out in 1996. As a result of these rebellions, a large supply of weapons is still in the hands of the ex-rebels and the militia.

To address this situation, the Government of the Central African Republic requested that an inter-African monitoring mechanism should be established. The Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) was set up in January 1997 at my request, under the authority of President El Hadj Omar Bongo, to help restore peace and security in this country, and in particular to disarm the ex-rebels, the militia and all other unlawfully armed individuals. The States participating in MISAB are Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo.

The countries contributing troops to MISAB deserve high praise for their tireless efforts to maintain security since February 1997. Nonetheless, serious tensions persist in the Central African Republic. They are likely to affect regional stability and therefore threaten international peace and security.

In the hope of placing the actions of MISAB within an appropriate political and legal framework, the Central African Republic requests the Security Council to authorize the States members of this mission to carry out the necessary operations, neutrally and impartially, to attain the objectives defined by the mandate of MISAB and to authorize, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, these States and the States supporting them to ensure the security and freedom of movement of MISAB personnel.

Please find attached to this letter the mandate of the inter-African force to monitor the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and the text of the agreement on the status of this force.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ange-Félix PATASSE

Appendix I

Mandate of the Inter-African force to monitor the implementation of the Bangui Agreements

Recalling the decision of the heads of State and Government of France and Africa meeting in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996,

Considering the declaration issued by the heads of State in Bangui on 25 January 1997,

Taking into account the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the various decisions and resolutions concerning the settlement of disputes, including the resolution establishing the central organ of the Organization of African States for the prevention, management and settlement of disputes,

Bearing in mind letters No. 009/97 and No. 010/97 of 7 January 1997 from the President of the Central African Republic requesting that an inter-African force be established in the Central African Republic,

I, El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, representing the heads of State designated by the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa, to help find a peaceful solution to the Central Africa crisis, at the request of President Ange-Félix Patasse of the Central African Republic,

Hereby establish the terms of the mandate of the inter-African force for security and peace.

Article 1

A neutral inter-African force, to be known as the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), is hereby established.

Article 2

The objective of MISAB is to help restore peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the agreements signed on 25 January 1997 in Bangui.

Article 3

In order to attain this objective, MISAB shall conduct operations to disarm the ex-rebels, the militia and all other unlawfully armed individuals.

Article 4

The force shall be composed initially of 600 men from the following six countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo.

It shall be structured as an operational staff headquarters composed of the following offices:

- A personnel management and administration office;
- An information gathering and processing office;
- An office for the planning and conduct of operations;
- An office of infrastructure resources management;
- A legal and civilian affairs office;
- A military police force;
- A legal adviser for, inter alia, coordinating provostal and judicial action;
- A liaison office with the Central African authorities and other parties concerned.

The work of the various offices shall be coordinated by a superior officer, deputy to the Commander of the force and Chief of Staff.

Article 5

The force shall be provided with a French logistical command unit.

Article 6

MISAB shall be placed under the political authority of President El Hadj Omar Bongo. General Amadou Toumani Touré, in his capacity as Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, shall have such authority delegated to him.

Article 7

The conditions of stay and deployment of MISAB shall be established by the status-of-forces agreement.

Article 8

The initial duration of the mandate shall be three months as from 31 January 1997. It may be renewed at the request of the President of the Central African Republic.

Article 9

The force shall be commanded by an officer appointed by President El Hadj Omar Bongo, representing the heads of State designated by the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa.

Article 10

The participating countries undertake to provide the necessary troops for the accomplishment of the mission.

Article 11

Logistical and financial support for the force shall be provided by France and/or other contributors of funds.

Article 12

The Commander of the force shall make an interim report to the President of the International Committee, who shall bring the report to the attention of President El Hadj Omar Bongo.

Bangui, 6 March 1997.

(Signed) El Hadj Omar BONGO
President of the Gabonese Republic
representing the heads of State designated
by the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of
State and Government of France and Africa

Appendix II

Status of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements

Agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic

and

the Governments of Burkina Faso, the Republic of Chad, the the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Senegal and the Togolese Republic

on the status of the forces

of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements

The Government of the Central African Republic and

The Governments of Burkina Faso, the Republic of Chad, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Senegal and the Togolese Republic,

Bearing in mind the joint declaration of 25 January 1997 issued by His Excellency Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, representing the heads of State designated by the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa to help find a solution to the Central African crisis, and His Excellency Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Agreement the following definitions shall apply:

"MISAB" means the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements, its subsidiary bodies, its military headquarters and all the national constituent elements/units which provide support to, prepare and participate in the operation,

"The operation" means the efforts of MISAB and its personnel (support, implementation, preparation and participation) to facilitate the restoration of peace and the abatement of tension in Bangui.

"MISAB personnel" means the civilian and military personnel of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements.

"Installation" means any of the premises and sites which MISAB requires to conduct operational, training and administrative activities relating to the operation and to house its personnel.

Article 2

The MISAB personnel participating in the operation in the territory of the Central African Republic shall enjoy the same privileges and immunities as members of the administrative and technical staff of diplomatic missions under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961.

Article 3

All personnel enjoying privileges and immunities under article 2 of the present Agreement shall be required to comply with the laws of the Central African Republic, in so far as such laws are compatible with their mandate, and not to engage in any activity that is incompatible with the nature of the operation.

Should any MISAB personnel breach Central African laws while in the territory of the Central African Republic, they shall be repatriated immediately to their country of origin, where appropriate action shall be taken against them.

The Government of the country to which the person committing the breach belongs shall be required to inform the Government of the Central African Republic of any legal proceedings instituted against that person.

Any MISAB personnel mistakenly arrested or detained by the authorities of the Central African Republic shall be handed over immediately to the MISAB authorities.

Article 4

The Government of the Central African Republic recognizes that emergency procedures for the entry and departure of MISAB personnel are called for. In the case of MISAB personnel, it shall waive the passport and visa formalities and the registration requirements applicable to aliens.

MISAB personnel shall carry on them identity documents, which they may be asked to show to the Central African authorities, it being understood that the operation and any movements that the operation entails shall not be hampered or delayed by a request of this nature.

Article 5

MISAB military personnel shall normally wear uniforms. All MISAB personnel may possess and bear arms if so authorized by the regulations which apply to them.

The Central African authorities shall accept as valid, and shall exempt from fees or charges, driving licences and permits issued to MISAB personnel by their respective national authorities.

Article 6

MISAB may display a distinctive marking and/or the national flags of its constituent elements or units on all MISAB uniforms, transport and installations.

Article 7

MISAB personnel, together with MISAB vehicles, aircraft and equipment, shall enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement and unhampered freedom of access throughout the Central African Republic, including in Central African airspace. Such freedom shall include, but not be restricted to, the right to bivouac, hold manoeuvres, establish quartering and make use of any area or installation necessary to the operation, subject to consultations with the competent Central African authorities.

The Central African authorities shall facilitate by any appropriate means all movements of personnel, vehicles, aircraft and supplies passing through airports or along roads.

MISAB shall not be required to pay dues, fees, tolls or other charges for the use of airports or roads. However, it shall not claim exemption from reasonable charges imposed for services requested and rendered, it being understood that operations/movements and access cannot be delayed until such charges have been paid.

Article 8

MISAB shall be entitled to import and export, free of duty or other restriction, equipment, provisions and supplies which are required for the operation, provided that such goods are for the official use of MISAB or for resale in the commissaries or canteens established for the benefit of MISAB personnel. The goods sold shall be for the exclusive use of MISAB personnel and shall not be transferred to third parties.

Article 9

MISAB shall be entitled to have its own internal mail and telecommunication services.

The Government of the Central African Republic recognizes that the use of telecommunication lines is necessary to the operation. Use of telecommunication lines and other means of communication which could interfere with the Central African telecommunication services shall be coordinated with the appropriate Central African authorities free of charge.

Article 10

The Government of the Central African Republic shall, wherever possible, assist MISAB to occupy and use at least expense the installations which are required for MISAB operations.

Article 11

The Central African Republic, on the one hand, and the States participating in MISAB, on the other, shall not take action against each other for any damage arising out of the action of MISAB personnel during the operation.

The Government of the Central African Republic shall bear the cost of damage caused to third parties. To this end, it shall be liable instead of MISAB, in any proceedings instituted by a third party or an assign thereof, for the compensation of damage caused to the person or the property of that third party as a result of the actions of MISAB personnel during the operation.

Article 12

MISAB shall be entitled to conclude contracts for services or supplies in the Central African Republic directly, without having to pay charges. Such services and supplies shall not be subject to sales or other tax.

Article 13

During the operation MISAB may have to improve or modify Central African infrastructure (distribution networks, bridges, buildings, etc.).

Improvements or modifications which are not temporary shall become part of the original infrastructure and belong to the same owner. Temporary improvements or modifications may be dismantled at the discretion of the Commander of MISAB, in which case the installation shall be restored as nearly as possible to its original state.

Article 14

Disputes between the Central African Republic and the States participating in MISAB relating to the interpretation or implementation of the present Agreement shall, unless already resolved, be settled through the diplomatic channel.

Article 15

Supplemental arrangements may be concluded to establish the technical details of the operation, in the light also of subsequent developments.

Article 16

The Government of the Central African Republic shall allow States not members of MISAB which participate in the operation, together with their personnel, to enjoy the same privileges and immunities as those which States members of MISAB and their personnel enjoy under the present Agreement.

Article 17

The Government of the Central African Republic undertakes to establish an ad hoc committee to help MISAB make representations to the competent Central African authorities and to monitor compliance with the present Agreement.

Article 18

The present Agreement shall remain in force until the end of the operation, unless the parties agree otherwise.

Article 19

The present Agreement shall enter into force upon its signature.

Appendix III

Declaration issued by heads of State

We,

His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, representing the heads of State designated by the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa to help find a solution to the Central African crisis, and

His Excellency Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic,

Meeting in Bangui today, 25 January 1997, and, with reference to the mandate entrusted to the International Monitoring Committee, having taken note with appreciation of the various reports on the work of the Committee, which is chaired by Army General Amadou Toumani Touré, former head of State of Mali,

Take note of the Preliminary Agreement on a National Reconciliation Pact, which is the outcome of a broad consultation of those representing the vital forces of the Central African nation, thereby embodying the solemn commitment of the political parties, the trade union federations and the civil society to respect the constitutional legal order and to lend full support to all initiatives to promote dialogue and national reconciliation;

Take note further of the cessation of the rebellious action involving some Army elements, which have agreed to place themselves at the disposal of the authorities of the Central African Army and to settle all future differences and disagreements by some means other than the use of weapons;

Commend the International Monitoring Committee for the successful performance of its task;

Commend the Central African people for the courage, wisdom and patriotism displayed throughout this crisis;

Undertake to pursue our efforts to restore and strengthen peace in the Central African Republic by maintaining the International Monitoring Committee and by helping to set up as promptly as possible the inter-African force to monitor security and peace.

Thank the United Nations for the assistance provided through the United Nations Development Programme to the International Monitoring Committee and invite it to continue such assistance until a lasting peace returns to the Central African Republic.

Done at Bangui, on 25 January 1997.

Signatories

For the delegation of heads of African States:
(Signed) His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO

For the Central African Republic:
(Signed) His Excellency Mr. Félix-Ange PATASSE

For the French Republic:
(Signed) His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marc SIMON
Ambassador and Senior Representative

Appendix IV

Declaration on the end of the rebellious action

Bearing in mind that the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa, held at Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996, decided to send to Bangui a mediation mission consisting of Their Excellencies El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, Mr. Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, Mr. Idriss Deby of Chad and Mr. Alpha-Oumar Konaré of Mali;

Bearing in mind that, in the wake of this mission, the International Monitoring Committee was established to implement the measures contained in the final communiqué of 8 December 1996 and to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the Central African crisis, and noting the encouraging results achieved;

Bearing in mind the address of the President of the Republic on 31 December 1996 announcing a number of measures to relax tension and issuing an appeal to rally the nation;

Concerned about strengthening the democratic process and the rule of law and about ensuring respect for human rights, safeguarding Central African democratic gains and preserving peace and national unity;

Taking into account the recommendations adopted by the General Meeting on National Defence on 9 September 1996 in Bangui;

Taking into account the general report and recommendations adopted by the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue on 18 January 1997 in Bangui;

Taking into account the Declaration prior to the agreement to end the rebellion adopted on 24 January 1997 in Bangui;

Determined, in the best interests of the Central African nation and the African continent, to employ dialogue and concerted efforts as the means to avert any return to armed confrontation;

We declare as follows:

1. We take note of the conclusions of the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, meeting from 11 to 18 January 1997 in Bangui, and we undertake to respect the provisions that concern us.

2. Pending the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, the purpose of which is to strengthen the current democratic process in our country, we affirm that the rebellious action triggered on 15 November 1996 is ended as from today.

3. We request a halt to all forms of constraint on collective and individual freedoms, including searches of persons and of premises and arrests.

4. We request the release of all persons apprehended in the course of the rebellious action.

5. We request that a monument to the memory of civilian and military victims of the three rebellions be built in Bangui.

6. We request that the International Monitoring Committee be maintained in order to ensure full compliance with the recommendations resulting from the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue and the Declaration prior to the agreement to end the rebellion adopted on 24 January 1997 in Bangui.

7. We request all the parties to settle all future differences and disagreements by some means other than the use of weapons.

8. We urge the public authorities to take into account the safeguards enumerated in the Declaration prior to the agreement to end the rebellion.

The present Declaration is being drawn up with the International Monitoring Committee as witness, under the auspices of His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, head of the delegation of heads of State designated by the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of France and Africa.

Done at Bangui, on 25 January 1997.

For the International Monitoring Committee:

(Signed) Amadou Toumani TOURE
Chairman

For the Officers:

(Signed) Anicet SAULET
Captain

Appendix V

Preliminary Agreement on a National Reconciliation Pact

We, the signatories to this Agreement,

- Political parties:[a] ADP, CN, ELAN, FC, FPP, GILA-MND, MDD, MDI/PS, MDREC, MESAN, MESAN-BOC, MLPC, MNR, MSCA, PARELI, PCD, PLD, PRC, PSD, RDC, UDR-FK, UDRP, UNDD, UPDES and UPR;

- Trade unions: CCTC, CNTC, CSTC, OSLP and USTC;

- Civil society,

Meeting in Bangui from 11 to 18 January 1997 at the seat of the National Assembly, in the context of the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, under the auspices of the International Monitoring Committee chaired by His Excellency General Amadou Toumani Touré,

Considering that the Nineteenth Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996, decided to send a mediation mission to Bangui composed of Their Excellencies El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, Mr. Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, Mr. Idriss Deby of Chad and Mr. Alpha-Oumar Konaré of Mali,

Considering the establishment, following this mission, of the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the measures contained in the final communiqué of 8 December 1996 and to help find a peaceful and lasting solution to the Central African crisis, and in view of the positive results achieved,

Considering the address by the President of the Republic on 31 December 1996 announcing a series of de-escalation measures and calling for a national reawakening,

Considering the worsening of socio-political tensions, which are likely to threaten national unity,

Determined, in the higher interest of the Central African nation and of the African continent, to prevent, through dialogue and consensus-building, any return to armed confrontation,

Desirous of reinforcing the democratic process and the rule of law, of ensuring respect for human rights, of safeguarding the achievements of Central African democracy and of preserving peace and national unity,

In view of the general report and recommendations of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, adopted in Bangui on 18 January 1997,

Have solemnly agreed as follows:

Article 1

We, the signatories to this Agreement, have resolved to respect constitutional legality and to safeguard the democratic process threatened by the grave socio-economic and political crisis and the disastrous consequences of various rebellions.

Article 2

We approve all the provisions of the conclusions stemming from the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, and we undertake to enforce them.

Consequently, we call on the government authorities to approve them and put them into practice in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Article 3

We request that the International Monitoring Committee be retained so as to ensure strict respect for the recommendations of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue.

In the case of non-compliance by one of the parties to this Agreement, any party having a complaint may resort to the arbitration of the International Monitoring Committee.

Article 4

We undertake to participate fully in the meetings of the National Reconciliation Conference to be organized.

Article 5

We support all negotiations and are willing to participate in them to help find a peaceful and lasting solution to all the problems stemming from the Central African crisis.

We undertake to settle, or to help settle through dialogue and consensus-building, all disputes that may arise.

Article 6

We reaffirm our attachment to the implementation of the Political Agreement Protocol, of the conclusions of the General meeting on National Defence and of the Minimum Standards Programme.

Article 7

The general report on the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue and the report of the Political and Institutional Commission, the Security and Social Commission and the National Reconciliation and Reparation Commission are attached to this Agreement as enforceable clauses.

DONE at Bangui on 18 January 1997.

(Signed)

Political parties:[a]

ADP	CN	ELAN
FC	FPP	GILA-MND
MDD	MDI/PS	MDREC
MESAN	MESAN/B	MLPC
MNR	MSCA	PARELI
PCD	PLD	PRC
PSD	RDC	UDR/FK
UDRP	UNDD	UPDES
UPR		

Trade unions:

CCTC	CNTC	CSTC
OSLP	USTC	

Civil society:

(a) Religious denominations:

AEEC	CECA	CICA

(b) Human rights, justice and democracy:

ACAT	AFJC	GERDES
LCDH	MDDH	OCDH

(c) National organizations:

JEUNESSE OFCA

(d) Occupational organizations:

UNPC

Notes

[a] Complete names of political parties, trade unions and members of civil society signatories to this Agreement:

ACAT	Association Centrafricaine de Lutte contre la Torture et l'Abolition de la Peina de Mort
ADP	Alliance pour la Démocratie et le Progrès
AEEC	Association des Eglises Evangéliques Centrafricaines
AFJC	Association des Femmes juristes de Centrafrique
CCTC	Confédération Chrétienne des Travailleurs Centrafricains
CECA	Conférence Episcopale Centrafricaine
CICA	Communauté Islamique Centrafricaine
CN	Convention Nationale
CNTC	Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs Centrafricains
CSTC	Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs Centrafricains
ELAN	Effort Libéral en Afrique Noire
FC	Forum Civique
FPP	Front Patriotique pour le Progès
GERDDES	Groupement d'Etudes et de Recherches pour la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social
GILA/MND	GILA-Mouvement National pour la Démocratie
JEUNESSE	Comité Ad Hoc de la Jeunesse
LCDH	Ligue Centrafricaine des Droits de l'Homme
MDD	Mouvement pour la Démocratie et le Développement

MDDH	Mouvement pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme
MDI/PS	Mouvement pour la Démocratie, l'Indépendance et le Progrès Social
MDREC	Mouvement pour la Démocratie en République Centrafricaine
MESAN	Mouvement d'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire
MESAN/B	Mouvement d'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire/Barthélémy Boganda
MLPC	Mouvement de Libération du Peuple Centrafricain
MNR	Mouvement de National pour le Renouveau
MSCA	Mouvement Socialiste Centrafricain
OCDH	Observatoire Centrafricain des Droits de l'Homme
OFCA .	Organisation des Femmes Centrafricaines
OSLP	Organisation des Syndicats Libres des Secteurs Public, Para-Public et Privé
PARELI	Parti Républicain Libéral
UNPC	Union Nationale du Patronat Centrafricain
PCD	Parti Chrétien Démocrate
PLD	Parti Libéral Democrate
PRC	Parti Républicain Centrafricain
PSD	Parti Social Démocrate
RDC	Rassemblement du Peuple Centrafricain
UND/FK	Union Démocratie Républicaine/Fini Kodro
UDRP	Union pour la Démocratie et le Renouveau Panafricain
UNDD	Union Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie
UPDES	Union du Peuple pour le Développement Economique et Social
UPR	Union pour la République
USTC	Union Syndicale des Travailleurs de Centrafrique

Appendix VI

General report of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue

From 11 to 16 January 1997 in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, a meeting was held of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue, a body set up by the International Monitoring Committee to find solutions to the crisis in that country, with the logistical and technical support of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangui.

Attending the meeting were representatives of political parties and civil society, dynamic forces of the Central African Republic, under the chairmanship of His Excellency General Amadou Toumani Touré, former head of State of Mali and Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee. The opening meeting of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue took place at the seat of the Central African National Assembly.

In his opening address, General Touré said that three rebellions in eight months was not acceptable. He called on all parties to come to their senses. Accordingly, after a number of consultations, he had decided to initiate two levels of dialogue and consensus-building to examine the problems thoroughly in order to find lasting solutions to the crisis rocking the country.

The first level of dialogue and consensus-building would function among the rebel youth of the Central African Armed Forces, and the second among the political parties, civil society and resource persons. He hoped that through frank, calm discussions, especially on the basis of mutual good faith, understanding and respect, the dynamic forces of the Central African nation would, on the one hand, help implement the measures announced by the head of State, His Excellency Ange-Félix Patasse, in his New Year's message to the nation on 31 December 1996 and, on the other hand, take stock of the old and/or new measures proposed; lastly, he hoped that they would follow the progress of the parallel negotiations being held between the International Monitoring Committee and the rebel youth, and take into account their results.

At the request of several members, the Committee decided, before beginning its work, to issue a declaration in which the participants undertook to work together to reach conclusions which would restore calm and hope to the Central African people and requested all the parties involved in the crisis to avoid all actions or words that might disturb the peaceful pursuit of their work.

The participants on the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue then decided to continue their work in three commissions: the Political and Institutional Commission, the Security and Social Commission and the National Reconciliation and Reparation Commission.

Each commission was chaired by a member of the International Monitoring Committee, each assisted by two or three rapporteurs appointed by each Commission.

The General Rapporteur, Chairman of the Review Committee and representative of the Study and Research Group on the Democratic, Economic and Social Development of Africa (GERDDES-Africa), was appointed by the International Monitoring Committee.

Upon completion of their work, the participants drew up a list of measures whose implementation, they trusted, would allow the Central African Republic to restore peace definitively so that it could finally pursue sustainable human development for the greater benefit of its people.

These measures, as discussed below, include political and institutional measures, social and security measures and national reconciliation measures.

I. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

1. With regard to the address by the head of State on 31 December 1996, the participants welcomed the announcement of a voting timetable, but they felt there was first a need to revise the electoral code to take into account the municipal elections. It was recommended that an independent, joint electoral commission should be set up whose function it would be to specify the timetable, taking into account the availability of funding and the level of security prevailing in the country.

2. The formation of a real government of national union, expanded to include all the political parties and civil society, was specified as a precondition. The criteria to be used to choose its members would be competence, integrity and geopolitical considerations.

3. Most participants agreed that a pension should be granted to former heads of State. Nonetheless, some of the representatives of civil society, i.e., some trade unions, expressed reservations, pointing out that if a pension was granted to former heads of State, it would also be necessary to take care of the population in general.

4. Concerning the suspension of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit, the participants asked that it simply be abandoned for purposes of promoting peace. However, some of the representatives of civil society expressed reservations, noting that this practice was likely to introduce the idea of impunity into Central African customs, to encourage poor management of government affairs and financial resources and to diminish accountability, an important element of good governance.

5. The establishment of a high-level council on broadcasting is being awaited impatiently. However, so as not to "put the cart before the horse", the participants proposed that a draft law on a press code should first be submitted to the National Assembly.

6. The participants felt that the proposed amnesty measure was indispensable and urgent.

The participants hoped it would be general but limited to events and acts relating to the third rebellion.

7. As for the General Meeting on the National Defence, the participants on the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue recommended that the acts promulgated by it should be enforced. The same applied to the conclusions of the General Meeting on Youth, which had not yet been implemented.

8. The discussions showed that there was an urgent need to revise the provisions of the code of penal procedure, providing a control mechanism for periods of preventive detention. Human and material resources should also be increased to improve the operation of the judicial system.

9. A long debate was held on the failure to respect procedures for acceding to various posts at the University of Bangui, which violated the standards of the universities members of the African and Malagasy Council on Higher Education (CAMES). The participants recommended that the government authorities should respect the autonomy of this institution. They also stressed the criteria of competence, integrity and experience for appointments to civil service posts.

10. The participants felt that there were so many departments under the Presidency of the Republic that they overlapped with the ministries and often presented a barrier between the head of State and his people. They therefore suggested that these departments should be considerably cut back, leaving only the essential services and reducing at the same time the costs of operating this Government institution.

11. One of the focal points of the debates was the revision of certain articles of the Constitution. The participants recommended a re-reading of the Basic Law.

12. The crucial problem on which the participants focused was the failure to enforce legal and regulatory texts and consensual acts. They strongly recommended the effective enforcement of these texts, including the Political Agreement Protocol and soon the Minimum Standards Programme. The participants also recommended that the authorities should take into account the conclusions of the work of the Committee on Consensus-building and Dialogue.

13. The participants decided to make an appeal for respect for the Constitution, for constitutional legality, for the institutions, laws and regulations of the Republic and for democratic principles and human rights.

II. NATIONAL RECONCILIATION MEASURES

14. National reconciliation requires first taking into account the harm that has been suffered by all sides. The participants therefor advocated the organization of an appropriate framework for a thorough evaluation of the damage caused by the various crises, and for just compensation for the victims.

15. In order to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace, the participants recommended holding a National Reconciliation Conference. However, the time

periods announced by the head of State seemed too short. The participants therefore suggested that those periods should be adjusted to allow time for adequate preparation.

To that end, the participants hoped that such a forum would be preceded by meetings at the prefectural level, which would send delegations and their proposals to the National Reconciliation Conference so as to involve all segments of the population.

The National Reconciliation Conference would conclude with a solemn commitment to peace by all participants.

16. For national reconciliation to last, the participants felt it was essential to establish a system of government management in the Central African Republic based on the principles of good governance, in particular skilful management of human and financial resources, transparency, the banning of impunity, the establishment of accountability and respect for human rights, so that a true culture of peace and democracy could take root in the country.

17. The participants suggested that the rebel soldiers in the Central African Armed Forces should be reintegrated with honour and dignity.

III. SOCIAL AND SECURITY MEASURES

18. Despite appeals to those connected with government institutions to return to their work and courses, the administrative offices and educational establishments are nearly empty. It is urgent to create conditions of confidence and security in order to remedy this situation.

The participants also recommended the payment of back salaries, pensions and scholarships and the revision of the 1996-1997 school calendar.